

CLAIMS

I Claim;

1. A method for establishing and initiating a transaction between purchasers and vendors over a wide area computer network, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a vendor database, said database comprising information on a plurality of vendors, said information comprising a description of the goods and services offered by said vendors;

providing a request for proposal (RFP) template to at least one potential purchaser over said wide area computer network;

receiving RFP from said at least one potential purchaser into said RFP template, over said wide area computer network, said RFP information comprising a description of the goods and services required by said at least one potential purchaser;

comparing said RFP information with said information in said vendor database;

identifying vendors in said vendor database offering goods and services that are similar to said goods and services required by said at least one potential purchaser;

communicating said RFP information to said identified vendors; and

1 communicating a response from at least one of said  
2 identified vendors to said at least one potential purchaser,  
3 said response comprising a proposal to provide goods and  
4 services to said at least one potential purchaser.

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6 2. The method of Claim 1 wherein said comparing step is  
7 carried out automatically by a centralized data processing  
8 system linked to said wide area computer network and to said  
9 vendor database.

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11 3. The method of Claim 1 wherein said comparing step  
12 comprises:

13 displaying a vendor selection list to said at least  
14 one potential purchaser over said wide area computer  
15 network, said list comprising at least one of said  
16 plurality of vendors and said information in said vendor  
17 database associated with said at least one of said  
18 plurality of vendors; and said identifying step comprises  
19 receiving a selection of vendors from said at least one  
20 potential purchaser over said wide area computer network.